1874MNRAS..34R.151.

attached to this Society, of which he was elected a Fellow on February 11, 1859. E. D.

Sir **David Salomons**, Bart., was born in the year 1797. Following the example of his father, a London merchant and underwriter, he entered at an early age into the busy affairs of commercial life, and soon became a most prosperous City merchant. Although, at this time, his thoughts were necessarily engrossed with the cares of business, giving him but little leisure-time for other occupations, yet he had a considerable taste for science, and especially for astronomy, which made him seek the society of men with kindred spirits, among whom were some distinguished Fellows of the Royal Astronomical Society. He was himself elected a Fellow of the Society on March 12, 1830, and he at once took a considerable interest in its proceedings at the ordinary meetings. For many years he continued in friendly association with the leading members of the Society, including our late esteemed President, Francis Baily; but though he was always ready with his counsel, the absorbing occupation of his time in his daily business prevented him from devoting that attention to astronomical pursuits which his natural taste for the science would otherwise have led him to follow. To enable him to carry out his magisterial duties in a satisfactory manner, as an Alderman of London, to which office he was elected in 1847, he studied law in middle life, and was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1849. He served the office of Sheriff of London and Middlesex in 1835–36, being the first member of the Jewish persuasion elected to that important office; he was also High Sheriff of Kent in 1840, and Lord Mayor in 1855. He continuously represented the borough of Greenwich in Parliament from 1859 to the time of his death, which took place on July 18, 1873, at the age of seventy-six. It is a curious coincidence that Greenwich, the natural home of astronomy, was represented in Parliament from 1865 to 1868 by two Fellows of the Royal Astronomical Society, Alderman Salomons and Sir Charles Bright. Sir David was created a Baronet in 1869, with special remainder to his nephew.

John Stanistreet was a native of Liverpool, the son of an eminent solicitor, who had an extensive practice, and was associated with some of the chief families there. He was, however, cut off in the prime of life—which, possibly, may have somewhat influenced the occupations and future destinies of his several sons.

The second son, John, very early exhibited considerable talent, which was especially developed in a decided taste for chemistry, electricity, and various departments of mechanics; leading him, amongst other contrivances, to the construction of an electrical machine and two small steam-engines. As he grew up, however, it became necessary for him to choose a profession, and he

1874MNRAS..34R.151.

adopted that of his father, whose surviving partner he ultimately joined. To this business he now devoted all his energy, following it with remarkable assiduity and ability, and quite forsaking with exemplary self-denial his former darling pursuits. As might thus have been expected, he assisted to raise his firm to the very top of the legal profession in Liverpool, and was employed in the negociation of some of the largest land sales ever effected in that great commercial city. Yet, in addition to the anxieties attendant upon this arduous pursuit of his profession, he had to suffer constantly, and occasionally severely, from a radically weak constitution, which became more manifestly developed in a serious disease of the lungs (apparently arising from a severe cold), which necessitated his passing a winter in Madeira, about the year 1840. He returned to England somewhat restored, but was ordered out again to pass the following winter there.

During Mr. Stanistreet's sojourn at Madeira on these two occasions he took several short voyages to the neighbouring islands, and went once in a Greek vessel up the Mediterranean as far as Greece. He thus acquired a taste for navigation, and during these voyages employed himself diligently in its study and practice, until he became able to determine the position of the ship by solar and lunar observations, in which he was aided by the possession of an excellent compensated duplex watch. By these means he obtained great skill in the use of the sextant, and on his return voyage he astonished the Greek captain by telling him on a certain day, that on the following morning he would see the island of Madeira—the prediction coming exactly true.

Unhappily, however, the main object of his voyages to Madeira was only very partially accomplished, his disorder being but slightly mitigated, and he continued to suffer great delicacy of health throughout the remainder of his life, making the toils of his profession peculiarly trying and laborious.

In 1851, in company with two friends, he went to Sweden, to observe the total eclipse of the Sun, and communicated an account of his observations to this Society. (*Monthly Notices*, Vol. XII., page 54.) He also proceeded to Spain in the *Himalaya* in 1860, with a view of witnessing the same phenomenon, but was disappointed by the unfavourableness of the weather.

A few years later he was attacked by another and more painful malady, which caused him frequent paroxysms of intense agony. All this was borne with exemplary patience and resignation, and, when not in actual pain, with surprising cheerfulness. But his increasing sufferings rendered his business-duties intolerably oppressive, and he was compelled, a few years ago, to retire from them, not however before he had realised an ample competency. Confined now almost absolutely within doors, he employed himself, as far as his remaining physical strength permitted, in cultivating, with more advanced skill, the mechanical and philosophical tastes of his youth. He converted a dressing-room of his house into a laboratory—furnished it with an excellent lathe,

1874MNRAS..34..153.

an elaborate slide-rest, a dividing engine, a wheel-cutting machine, and even a small smith's forge, and there contrived and constructed various machines of great ingenuity. Chief among these were Mr. Stanistreet's A^1 clock, described and figured in the *English Mechanic* of March 8, 1872; and his micro-ruling machine, described and figured in the monthly journals of the Liverpool Microscopical Society for September and December 1871. The smallness, and regularity of rate, of the A^1 clock, in very unequal temperatures, was really a marvel. The compensation seemed perfect, and it is but inadequate praise to say that its going rivalled that of the best chronometers usually tested at the Royal Observatory.

Mr. Stanistreet's health, however, continued to decline, and after several attacks, from which his recovery seemed doubtful, he finally succumbed on the 17th of April, 1873. W. L.

Professor GIOVAN BATTISTA DONATI was born at Pisa, on December 16, 1826, and was the son of Dr. P. Donati, of that city. After his preliminary studies at the University of Pisa, where he had for his tutor our late Associate, M. Mossotti, he devoted himself to the special study of mathematics, and to original analytical researches. On August 1, 1852, he was appointed to the Observatory of the Museum of Natural History, at Florence, which at that time was under the direction of Professor Amici. In October 1854 he was made an *aide-astronome*; and on September 29, 1858, the title of *astronome-adjoint* was conferred upon him, in consideration of the discovery by him of the magnificent comet which still bears his name.

At this time Donati had already attracted the attention of astronomers out of his own country by his cometary observations, the results of which had been inserted in various scientific publications, including the *Monthly Notices*, where his name first appears as an observer and discoverer of comets in 1855. His fortunate discovery of a small telescopic comet on June 2, 1858, which ultimately became the remarkable comet of that year, brought him at once into general notice. From being a comparatively obscure observer, Donati found himself suddenly the astronomical hero of the day, for his brilliant comet not only formed an interesting subject for intelligent study, on account of the various speculations as to its physical constitution, but it also created for a time a lively taste for astronomy among all classes of the community. Fortunately, Donati's zeal as an observer did not allow him to remain satisfied with the honour he had so unexpectedly attained, for we find him continuing with increased energy as an assiduous observer of comets and other astronomical phenomena. On December 22, 1859, he was appointed Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Observatory.

On taking charge of the Observatory, Prof. Donati's first thoughts were directed to the advisability of constructing a new Observatory at Florence, because the situation of the building,